

STELLA



FIFTH EDITION

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STELLA.

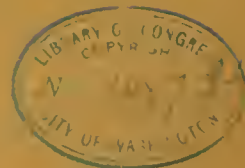
BY

MRS. MARY B. M. TOLAND.



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1878

STELLA,

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A true Story—every incident happened as related. One evening I took my little boy on my lap, to tell him a story, and suiting the language to his understanding, I recited in rhymes—“Stella,” or how I tamed a little Indian girl. He was so much interested, that he would insist on my repeating the same story nearly every evening, until I concluded that, which pleased him so much, would entertain other children.

The first edition was smaller, and in pamphlet form, which I have revised, and added six pages, which were suggested by an English Author, who said the scenes of her confirmation too impressive to be omitted.

COME little Hugh, 'tis nearly time
To hear the old clock's measured chime—
One, two, three, four and five, then six,
While nurse shall your night-wrappers fix,
I will tell you a tale in rhyme.

What think you I saw,
As I went to the door?
A wild little Indian
So meagre and poor.
Her arms were all bare,
And an old ragged sack
Was the only garment,
That covered her back.



S T E L L A .

Her hair was on end,
Like the brush of a sweep,
And her little bead eyes
Were sunken and deep.
Her broad, ugly face
Had a little flat nose;
And she was all dirt
From her head to her toes.

Your papa had sent her
To be my own maid;
To teach her, and make her
A Christian, he said.
But I, when I saw her,
Would rather that she
Be maid of the forest
Than maiden to me,
I tried to refuse her,
And send her away
By the person who brought her,
I offered to pay

S T E L L A.

Much more than your papa
Had paid him to bring
As a present to me
The odd little thing.

He would not,---and then
To the kitchen I brought
The poor little squaw,
To be clothed, fed, and taught.
A nurse from the country
Was waiting a place:
"To nurse a wild Injun,"
She said, "was disgrace."
Then Mary, our cook,
With a heart warm and true,
Said the poor little thing
Was hungry, she knew;
And gave her some cake,
Which she threw in her face,
And ran out of the door.
As if in a race.

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S T E L L A .

To catch her and bring her
Back into the house,
Was hardly as easy
As catching a mouse.
She was swift as an arrow,
And terribly wild,
Resembling a monkey
Much more than a child.

But the nurse-girl and Joe,
And Mary, the cook,
From chasing and searching
In every nook
Of the garden and yard,
And at last in the street,
Found her snugly ensconced
In a toy-store retreat,
Just back of the counter,
Among some old bags,
As if quite at home
In the rubbish and rags.

S T E L L A .

She scratched, fought, and bit,
Every step of the way.
Said Joe, "Mum, I'm thinking
Her mind is asthray."

And seeing her capers,
I soon thought the same,
With wonder how I
Such a savage could tame---
She scowling defiance,
With threatening frown,
Her face with revenge
Getting blacker than brown.

A mission imposed---
Unpleasant, unsought---
Your papa a practical
Lesson had taught
To me, as a Christian.
I bowed to his will,
But could not help feeling
Disgust at her still.



S T E L L A .

The two girls then filled up
A large washing tub;
They gave her a bath,
With a scrubbing-brush rub;
And sheared her stiff hair off,
While I sat me down,
With warm scarlet flannel,
To make her a gown.

She would eat no cooked food,
Preferring raw meat,
Which she took from the dogs;
Or else she would eat
The breast off a duck,
Which so frightened poor Joe,
Said he, "Mum, I'm fearing
"She'll ate me up so.
"If I was to spake, mum,
"And tell yez my mind,
"I'd be sending her back
"To the forest to find

S T E L L A .

“ Her natural diet

“ Of moles, mice, and snakes---

“ The house in sich awful

“ Confusion she makes.”

I thought, the next morning,

That Joe was quite right.

A crowd in the street

Gave us all such a fright.

What strange thing had happened?

A fire, perchance.

No, Stella was dancing

A wild native dance,

In front of the window,

Without shame or fear,

The crowd looking on

With jest and with jeer.

The moment she saw us,

She crept into bed,

And under her blankets

She covered her head

STELLA.

Soon after I missed
My prettiest pet;
Though I never once thought
It was Stella who ate
My lovely canary,
So gentle and tame.
'Twould light on my finger
And answer its name.

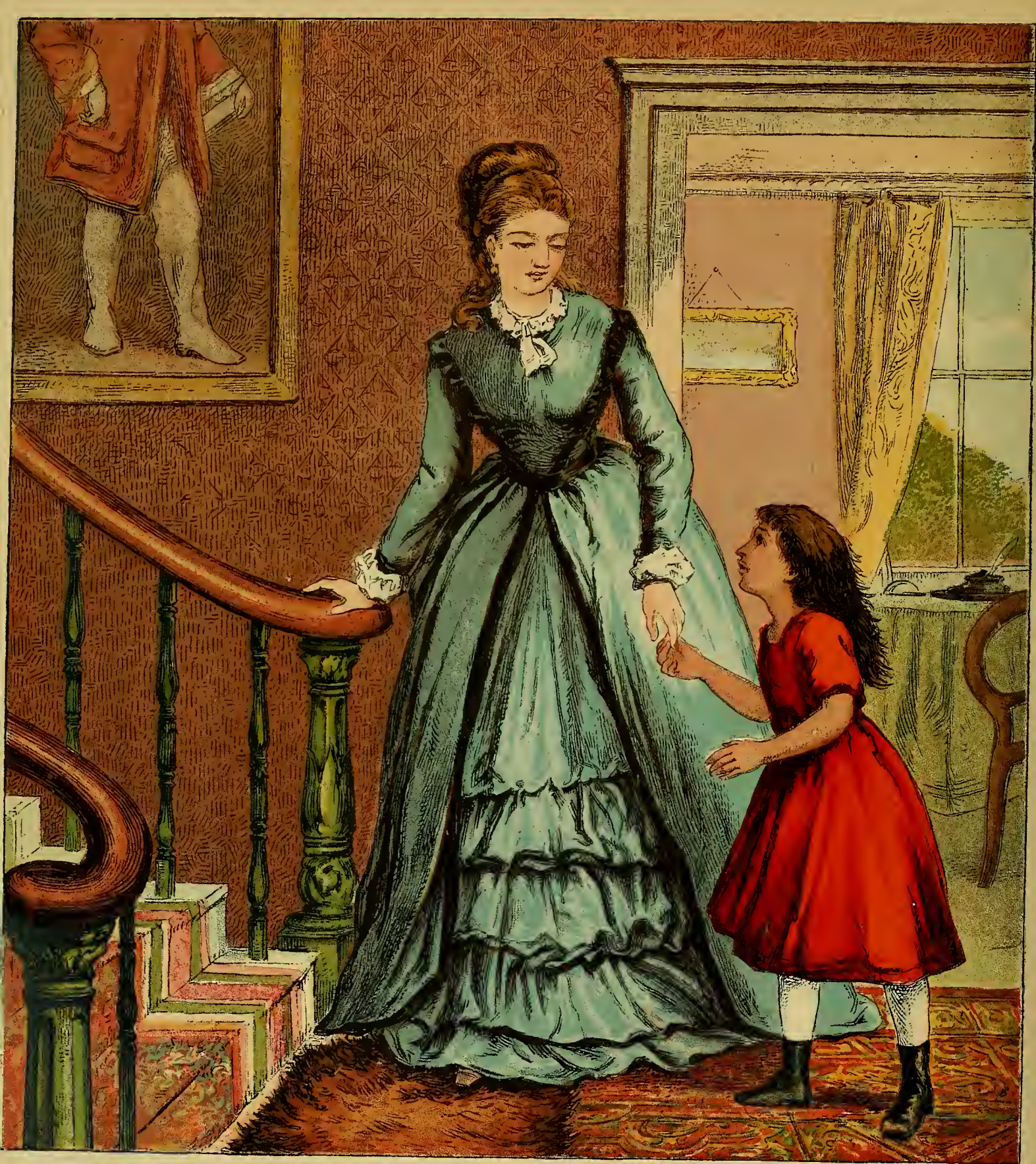
Then, day after day,
As I came from my drive,
One less of my pets
Would be found alive;
Until seven in all
Of my birdlings were gone,
And Joe found 'twas Stella
The mischief had done.
For in her small box,
With rags altogether,
He found some birds' legs,
A beak, and tail feather.

STELLA.

She had eaten them all,
The same as a cat.
Disgust turned to loathing,
I'm sure, after that.

Days, weeks, passed away---
I never once saw
The dread of our household,
The poor little squaw,
Until, crossing the hall,
I met her one day,
And she looked in my face,
As much as to say,
"Please, mistress, be kind,"
Then offered a plum
Of sugar, all stuck to her
Finger and thumb.
It melted my heart,
And I never again
Of our Stella's wild tricks
Had cause to complain.





S T E L L A .

We christened her Stella---
As star of the night:
She grew out of darkness,
So faithful and bright.
Her Sunday School teacher
Would smile when she saw
The first at the church
Was the poor little squaw.

On every Feast Day
She was up with the dawn,
Gleaning fair flowers
From garden and lawn;
Which she took to the church
As her offering of love,
That their fragrant beauty
Her Lord would approve.

And never a Fast
Of the church but she kept.
On solemn Good Friday,
Most sadly she wept;

S T E L L A .

And, sobbing, would ask me
Again to explain
Our crucified Jesus
Arisen again.

“You tell me that Heaven
“Is dazzling bright.
“Is it there where the stars
“Do gather their light?
“And, mistless, please tell me,
“Will Stella be fair---
“If her spirit is good---
“As the angels up there?”

Such questions she'd ask.
While her little bead eyes
Seemed searching my heart,
As I made her replies.
“’Tis strange I'm so dark,”
She often would say--
“Is there nothing will wash
“This color away?”

S T E L L A .

With her book in her hand
From morning till night,
We never could teach her
To spell, read, or write.
She tried, but she could not;
The simplest word
Was forgotten so soon as
Another she heard.
Illustrated primers of every kind
Were brought into service,
But none reached her mind.
Seven years passed away---
She had gained all our love,
So faithful, devoted,
And true, did she prove.
So robust and healthy,
And happy she seem'd,
That Stella was ill,
We never once dreamed.
And yet she grew thoughtful
And sad every day,

S T E L L A .

Alone by herself

She would wander away,
As yearning for something
That we could not give.

In this stifled atmosphere
She could not live.

From sleeping she'd waken
To tell me her dream :

“I was playing last night

By the same mountain stream,
Where I lived long ago,

So near the blue sky
I could touch the soft clouds,
The hills were so high.

I had a long line,

With a little sharp hook,
And caught some nice fishes,
From out of the brook.

On its green mossy bank
Grew grasses so sweet,





S T E L L A .

I gathered a handful,
But when I would eat,
I could not, and trembling
I awoke in a fright,
To see the stars shining
In darkness of night."

Then clasping my hand
As I drew near her bed,
She looked in my face, and
With pleading voice---said
"Please, Mistress, I'm wishing
Dear Bishop to see,
I love him so much ;
Will you ask him for me ?
You promised, Whitsunday,
That I, with the rest
Should kneel at the Altar---
In pure white be dressed,
And confirmed in our church
How happy I'd be.

STELLA.

But, Mistress! no Whitsun---
Again shall I see."

Next day on the street,
Our good Bishop I met,
And Stella's sad mission
I did not forget.

"So ill," he exclaimed
"Why did you not send
For me? 'Tis my duty
Such calls to attend.

I will go with you now."
Then gladly I led
Our Right Reverend friend,
To Stella's sick bed.

She whispered with joy
As we entered her room;
"I am happy, dear Mistress,
I knew he would come."

Then timidly turning
Her glad beaming face,

S T E L L A .

She asked in the fold of
Our Church for a place.

Next morning an Altar
Was raised near her bed,
With tear-trembling voices
Responses were said;
With flowers, all fragrant,
But withering there,
We knelt at the last, in
Deep silence of prayer.
Robed in white---'twas her wish---
And thus as she lay,
Her spirit departed
Ere noon of that day.

The elements sacred
Her lips had just pressed;
She whispered, "So Jesus
The little ones blessed!
I'm happy! so happy!
Oh, please, do not weep"---

S T E L L A .

And she smiled as if angels
Were guarding her sleep.

I may not tell the rest my boy,
'Tis wrong to cloud your childish joy;
For Stella is so happy there,
Among the angels good and fair,
We think of her as one.
Dying, she left her savings all,
Her legacy, we well may call,
To buy the Font, the very same
Where you received your Papa's name.
Good-night! our story's done.

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